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(54) **SUBSTRATE CONTACT ETCH PROCESS**

(56) **References Cited**

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(57) **ABSTRACT**

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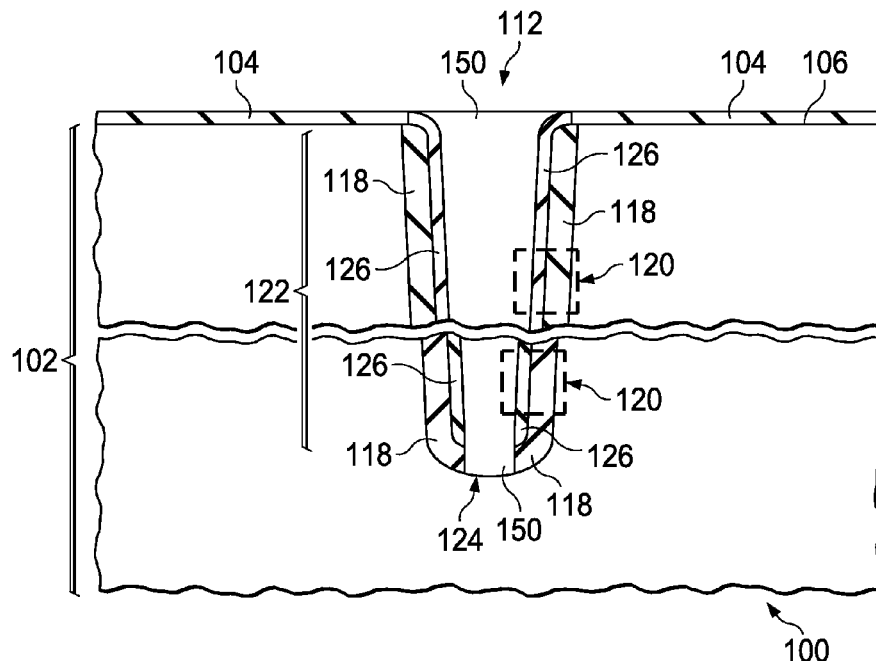
(51) **Int. Cl.**
H01L 21/311 (2006.01)
H01L 21/768 (2006.01)
H01L 23/535 (2006.01)

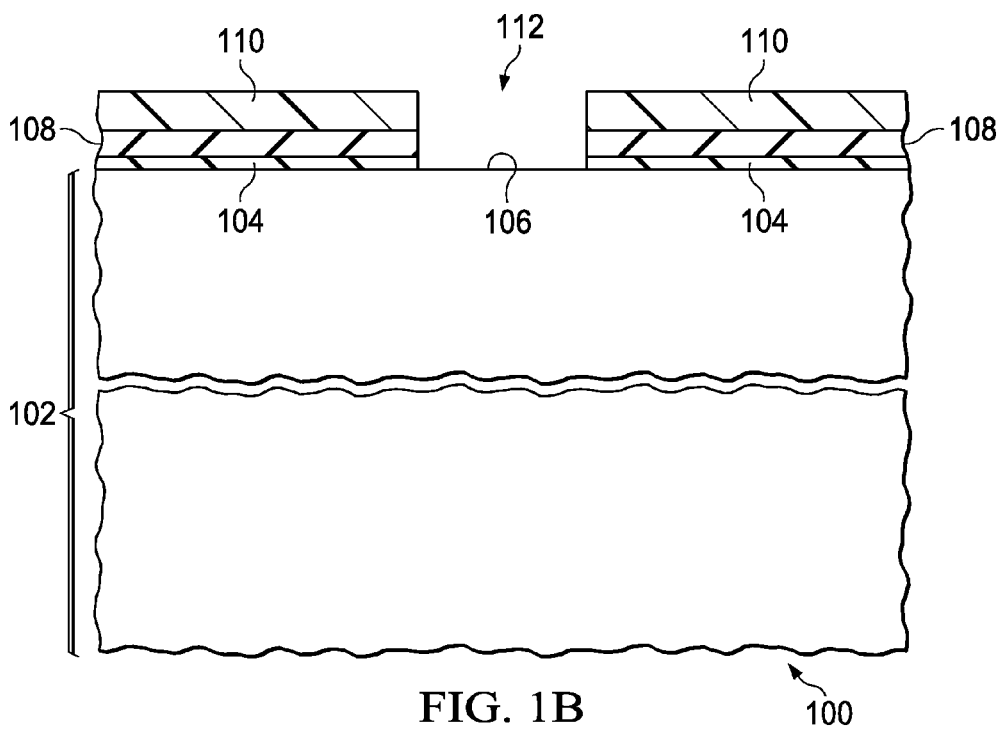
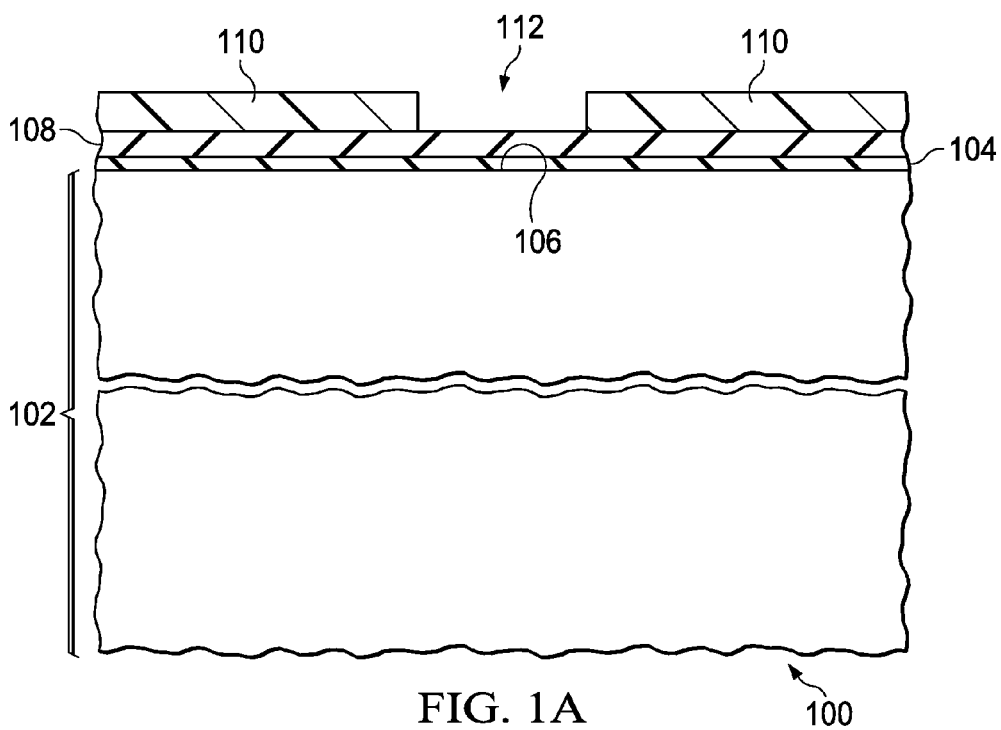
A semiconductor device with a deep trench has a dielectric
liner formed on sidewalls and a bottom of the deep trench.
A pre-etch deposition step of a two-step process forms a
protective polymer on an existing top surface of the semi-
conductor device, and on the dielectric liner proximate to a
top surface of the substrate. The pre-etch deposition step
does not remove a significant amount of the dielectric liner
from the bottom of the deep trench. A main etch step of the
two-step process removes the dielectric liner at the bottom
of the deep trench while maintaining the protective polymer
at the top of the deep trench. The protective polymer is
subsequently removed.

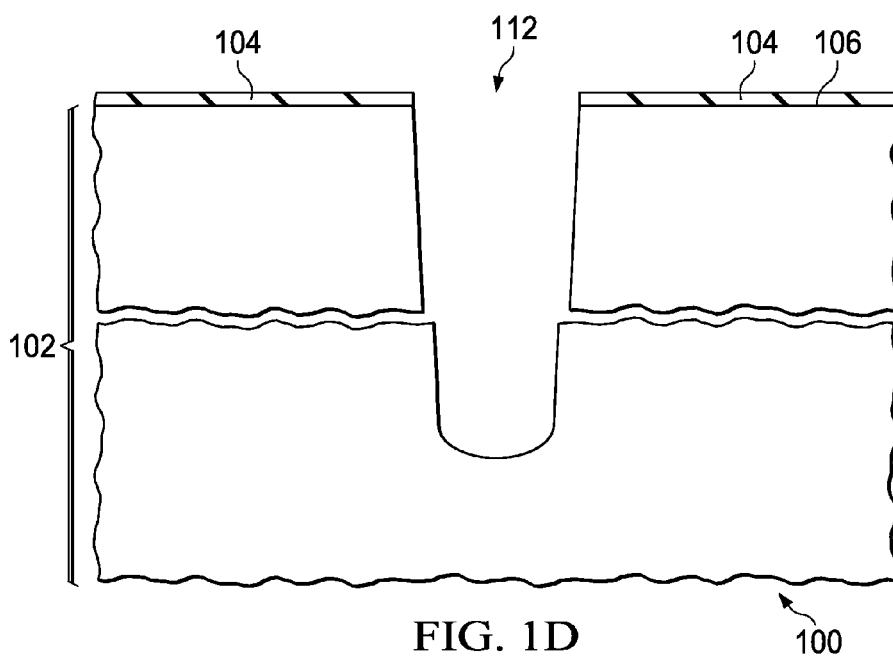
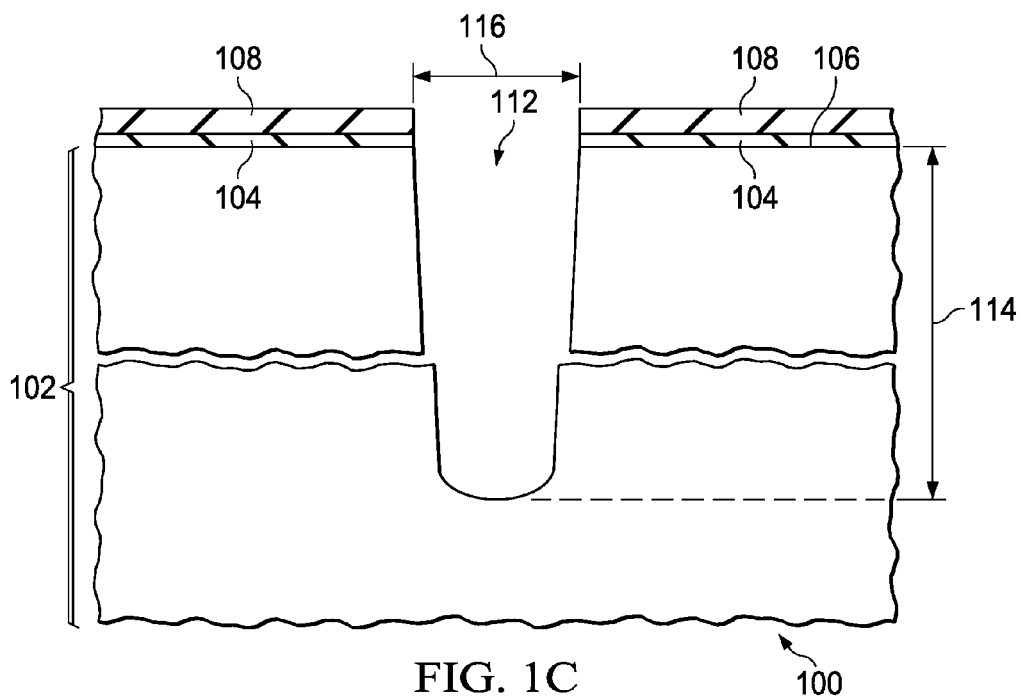
(52) **U.S. Cl.**
CPC **H01L 21/76895** (2013.01); **H01L 23/535**
(2013.01)

(58) **Field of Classification Search**
CPC H01L 21/762; H01L 21/76205; H01L
21/76224; H01L 21/76229
See application file for complete search history.

16 Claims, 5 Drawing Sheets







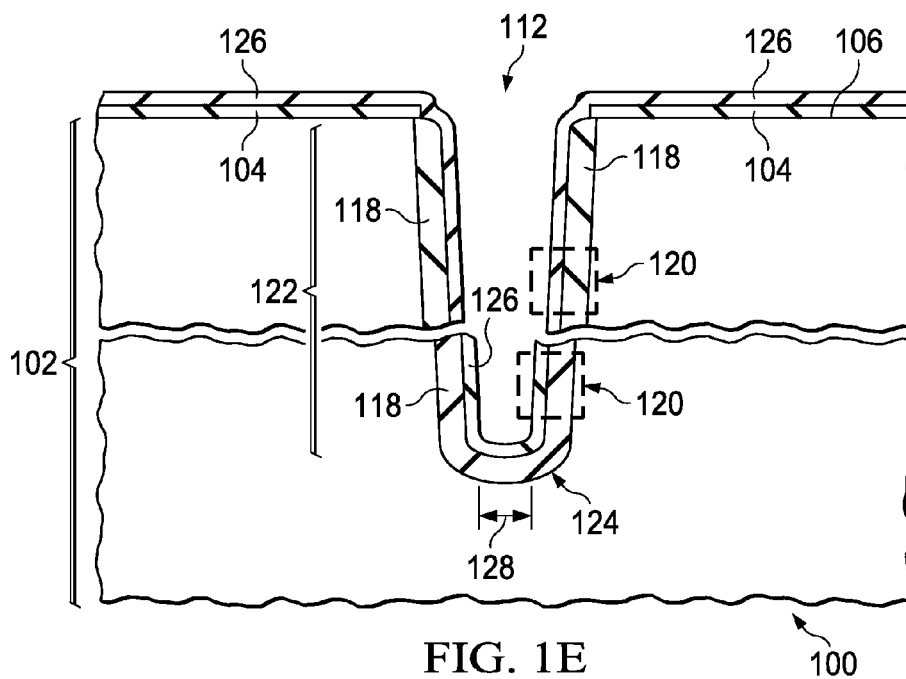


FIG. 1E

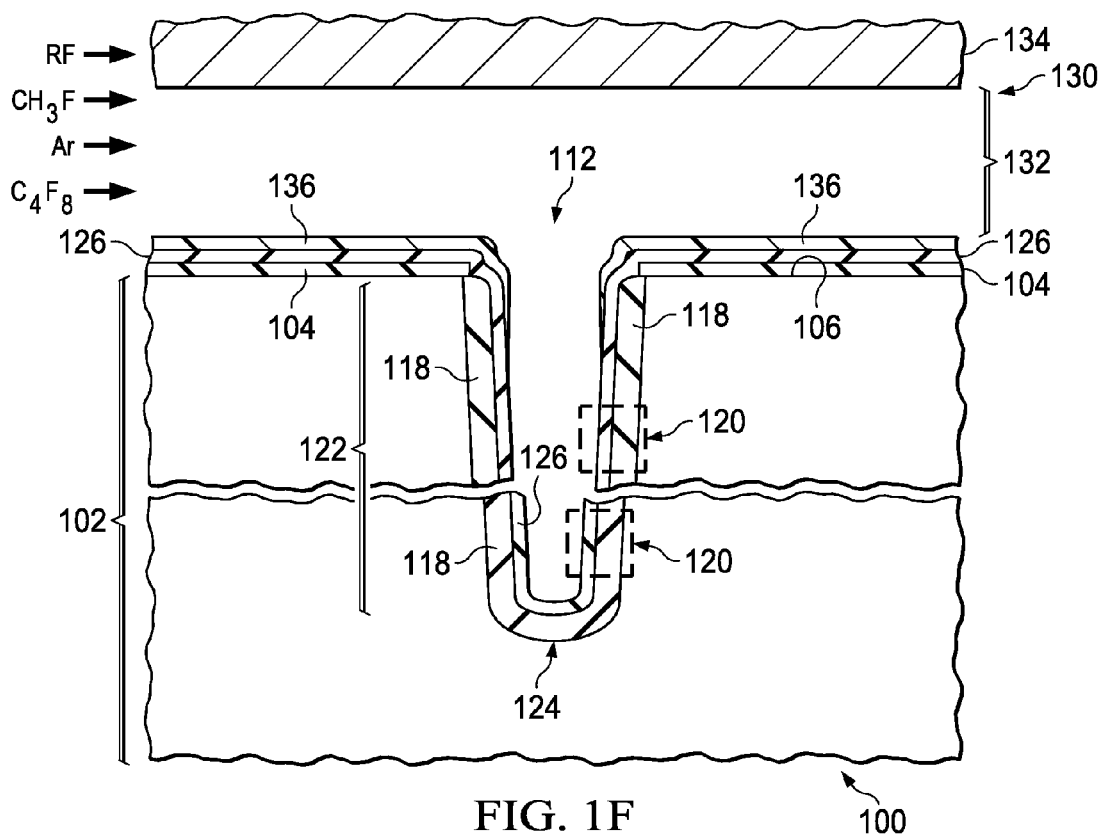
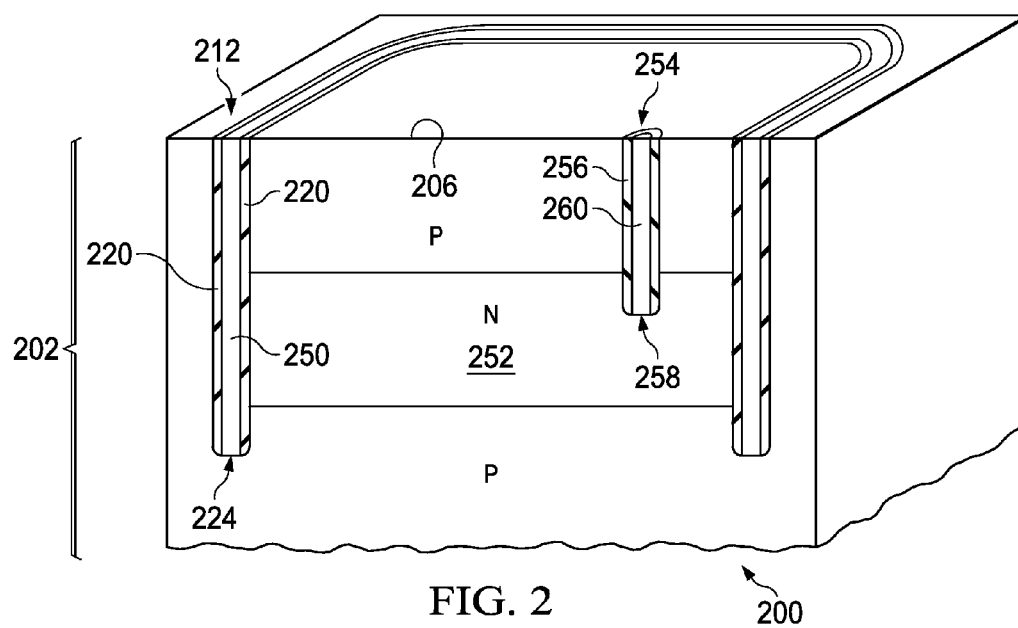
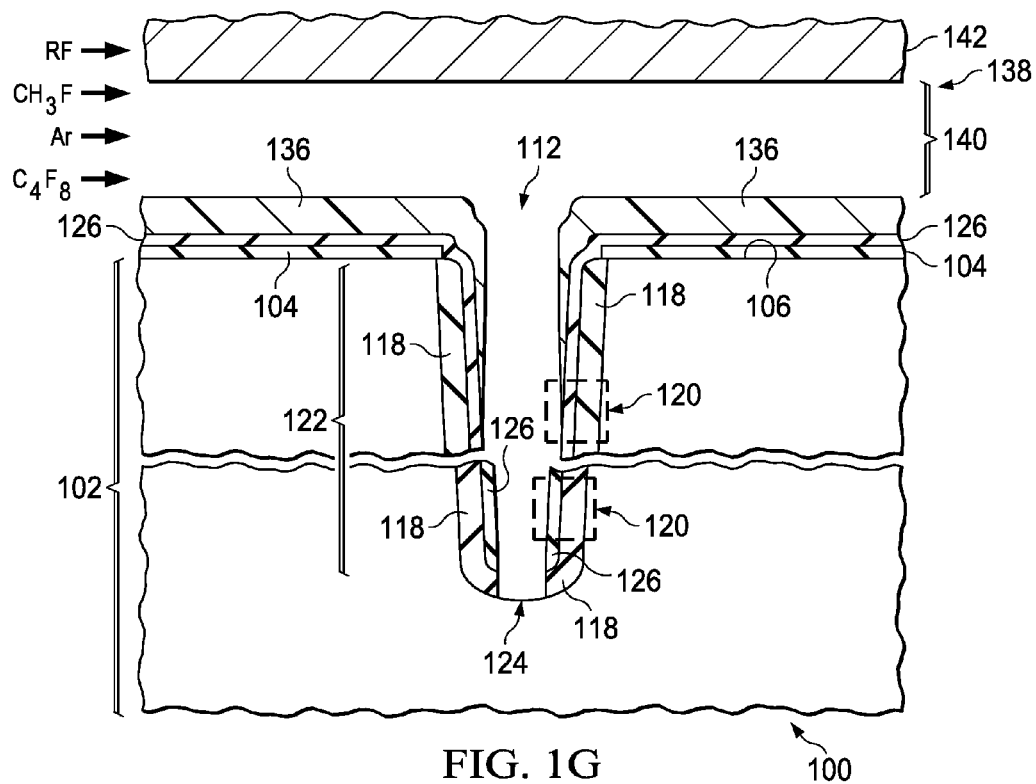
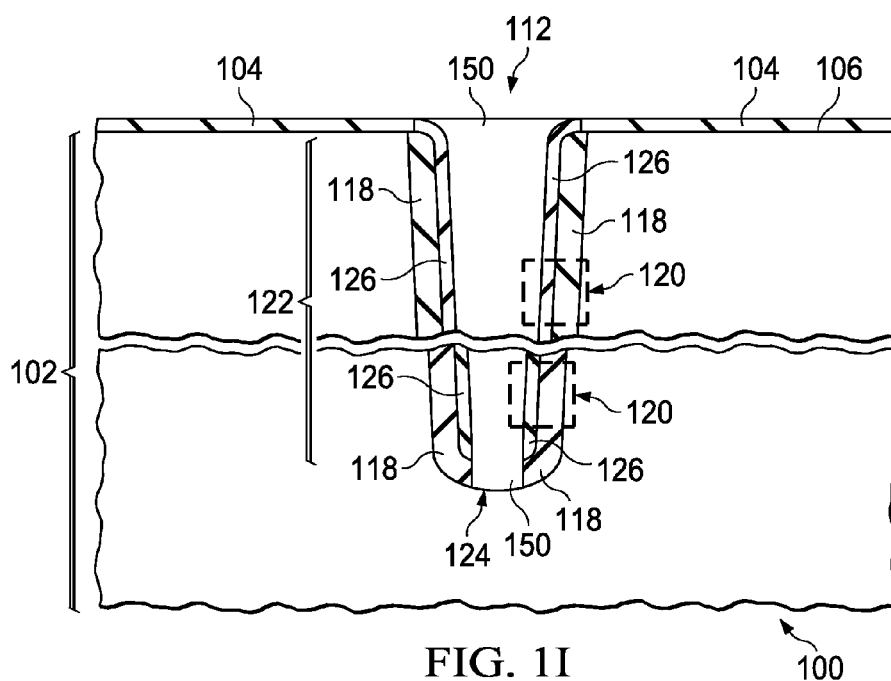
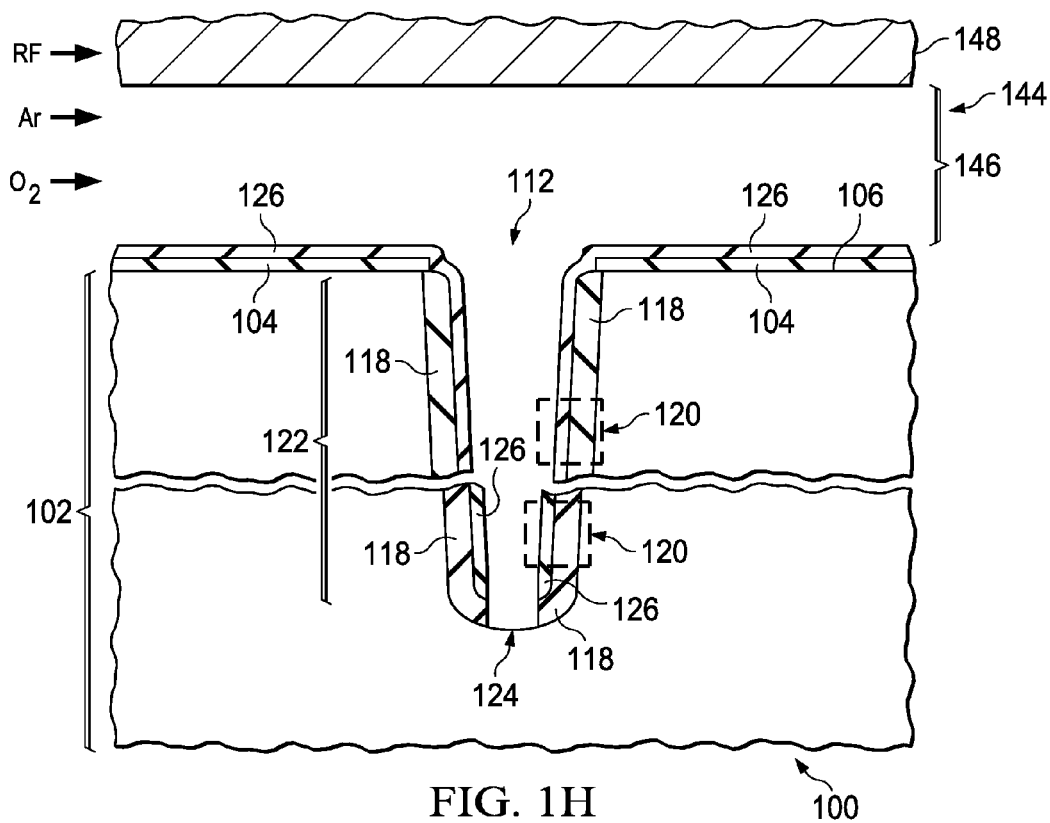


FIG. 1F





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SUBSTRATE CONTACT ETCH PROCESS**FIELD OF THE INVENTION**

This invention relates to the field of semiconductor devices. More particularly, this invention relates to deep trench contacts in semiconductor devices.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

A semiconductor device has a deep trench at least 10 microns deep, with a silicon dioxide liner on sidewalls and bottom of the deep trench. It is desirable to remove the silicon dioxide liner at the bottom of the trench without substantially reducing the silicon dioxide liner on the sidewalls of the deep trench, in order to make a contact to the substrate. A reactive ion etch (RIE) process used to remove the silicon dioxide liner at the bottom of the trench to make contact to the substrate has high ion energies which also remove dielectric material from the liner at the top of the deep trench, which undesirably widens a top portion of the deep trench. Widening the top portion necessitates a thicker layer of deposited silicon dioxide in the liner, which disadvantageously increases fabrication cost.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The following presents a simplified summary in order to provide a basic understanding of one or more aspects of the invention. This summary is not an extensive overview of the invention, and is neither intended to identify key or critical elements of the invention, nor to delineate the scope thereof. Rather, the primary purpose of the summary is to present some concepts of the invention in a simplified form as a prelude to a more detailed description that is presented later.

A semiconductor device is formed by etching a deep trench at least 10 microns deep in a substrate. A dielectric liner is formed on sidewalls and a bottom of the deep trench. A two-step process is used to remove the dielectric liner at the bottom of the deep trench. A pre-etch deposition step of the two-step process forms a protective polymer on an existing top surface of the semiconductor device, and on the dielectric liner proximate to a top surface of the substrate. The pre-etch deposition step does not remove a significant amount of the dielectric liner from the bottom of the deep trench. A main etch step of the two-step process removes the dielectric liner at the bottom of the deep trench while maintaining the protective polymer at the top of the deep trench. The protective polymer is subsequently removed.

DESCRIPTION OF THE VIEWS OF THE DRAWING

FIG. 1A through FIG. 1I are cross sections of a semiconductor device, depicted in successive stages of an example fabrication sequence.

FIG. 2 is a cross section of an example semiconductor device.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF EXAMPLE EMBODIMENTS

The present invention is described with reference to the attached figures. The figures are not drawn to scale and they are provided merely to illustrate the invention. Several aspects of the invention are described below with reference to example applications for illustration. It should be under-

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stood that numerous specific details, relationships, and methods are set forth to provide an understanding of the invention. One skilled in the relevant art, however, will readily recognize that the invention can be practiced without one or more of the specific details or with other methods. In other instances, well-known structures or operations are not shown in detail to avoid obscuring the invention. The present invention is not limited by the illustrated ordering of acts or events, as some acts may occur in different orders and/or concurrently with other acts or events. Furthermore, not all illustrated acts or events are required to implement a methodology in accordance with the present invention.

FIG. 1A through FIG. 1I are cross sections of a semiconductor device, depicted in successive stages of an example fabrication sequence. Referring to FIG. 1A, the semiconductor device **100** is formed in a substrate **102** such as a silicon wafer or a wafer of another semiconductor material. Other forms of the substrate **102**, such as an epitaxial layer of semiconductor material, are within the scope of the instant example. In FIG. 1A through FIG. 1I, the substrate **102** is divided to show details of a subsequently-formed deep trench more clearly at both a top portion of the deep trench and at a bottom portion of the deep trench. A pad layer **104** is formed over a top surface **106** of the substrate **102**. The pad layer **104** may include, for example, a layer of thermal oxide at the top surface **106** and a layer of silicon nitride, formed by a low pressure chemical vapor deposition (LPCVD) process, on the layer of thermal oxide. A layer of hard mask oxide **108** is formed over the pad layer **104**. The layer of hard mask oxide **108** may be, for example, 1 micron to 2 microns thick, depending on a depth of the subsequently-formed deep trench. The layer of hard mask oxide **108** may be formed by a plasma enhanced chemical vapor deposition (PECVD) process using tetraethyl orthosilicate (TEOS), also referred to as tetraethoxysilane, or by using a high density plasma (HDP) process. A trench mask **110** is formed over the layer of hard mask oxide **108** so as to expose an area for the deep trench **112**. The trench mask **110** includes photoresist formed by a photolithographic process, and may include an anti-reflection layer such as an organic bottom anti-reflection coat (BARC) and/or a hard mask layer of silicon nitride.

Referring to FIG. 1B, the layer of hard mask oxide **108** and the pad layer **104** are removed in the area for the deep trench **112** exposed by the trench mask **110**. The layer of hard mask oxide **108** may be removed by an RIE process. The pad layer **104** is subsequently removed, for example by the same RIE process or by another RIE process. The trench mask **110** may optionally be removed or left in place at this time.

Referring to FIG. 1C, the deep trench **112** is formed by removing material from the substrate **102** using the patterned layer of hard mask oxide **108** as an etch mask. The deep trench **112** is formed by a timed RIE process. The deep trench **112** has a depth **114** of at least 10 microns; the depth **114** may be 25 microns to 40 microns. The deep trench **112** has a width **116** of 0.5 microns to 3 microns. Any remaining portion of the trench mask **110** of FIG. 1B is removed by the RIE process to form the deep trench **112**. The deep trench **112** may be slightly tapered, as depicted in FIG. 1C.

Referring to FIG. 1D, the layer of hard mask oxide **108** of FIG. 1C may optionally be removed after the deep trench **112** is formed, as depicted in FIG. 1D. Alternatively, the layer of hard mask oxide **108** may be left in place during subsequent fabrication steps.

Referring to FIG. 1E, a layer of thermal oxide **118** of a dielectric liner (**120**) is formed on sidewalls **122** and a

bottom **124** of the deep trench **112**. The layer of thermal oxide **118** may be, for example, 200 nanometers to 300 nanometers thick. A layer of silicon dioxide **126** of the dielectric liner **120** is formed on the layer of thermal oxide **118**, for example by a sub-atmospheric chemical vapor deposition (SACVD) process. The layer of silicon dioxide **126** may be, for example, 300 nanometers to 700 nanometers thick. The layer of thermal oxide **118** combined with the layer of silicon dioxide **126** provide the dielectric liner **120**. The dielectric liner **120** covers the bottom **124** of the deep trench **112** and has a space **128** of at least 300 nanometers proximate to the bottom **124**, so that a thickness of the dielectric liner **120** at the bottom **124** is not more than a thickness of the dielectric liner **120** on the sidewalls **122**.

A total thickness of the dielectric liner **120** may be, for example, 500 nanometers to 1 micron, and is selected to provide a desired breakdown strength for operation of the semiconductor device at a particular voltage. In another version of the instant example, the relative thicknesses of the layer of thermal oxide **118** and the layer of silicon dioxide **126** may be varied to provide desired process latitude. In an alternative version of the instant example, the dielectric liner **120** may consist of the layer of thermal oxide **118** alone, without the layer of silicon dioxide **126**.

Referring to FIG. 1F, a preetch deposition process of a two step process is performed to form a protective polymer **136** on an existing top surface of the semiconductor device **100** over the top surface **106** of the substrate **102**, extending onto the dielectric liner **120** in the deep trench **112** proximate to the top surface **106** of the substrate **102**. The protective polymer **136** may be, for example, 10 nanometers to 50 nanometers thick over the top surface of the semiconductor device **100** adjacent to the deep trench **112**. Substantially no polymer is formed on the dielectric liner **120** at the bottom **124** of the deep trench **112**. Substantially no dielectric material is removed from the dielectric liner **120** during the pre etch deposition process. One method for forming the protective polymer **136** will now be described. The semiconductor device **100** is placed in a first chamber **130**, for example an etch chamber of a wafer processing tool. A substrate chuck, not shown, supporting the substrate **102** may be held at a temperature of 0° C. to 35° C. A carrier gas such as argon is flowed into a first plasma region **132** of the first chamber **130** over the semiconductor device **100** at a rate of 125 standard cubic centimeters per minute (sccm) to 1500 sccm. A fluorinated hydrocarbon with a fluorine-to-carbon atomic ratio of at least 2 to 1, for example a perfluorinated hydrocarbon such as octafluorocyclobutane (C_4F_8) as depicted in FIG. 1F, is flowed into the first plasma region **132** at a rate of 10 sccm to 50 sccm with the carrier gas. Fluoromethane (CH_3F) is flowed into the first plasma region **132** at a rate of 20 sccm to 80 sccm, with the fluorinated hydrocarbon. A pressure in the first plasma region **132** is maintained at 35 millitorr to 65 millitorr. Radio frequency (RF) power is applied to an electrode **134** over the first plasma region **132** at an average power level of 0.5 watts to 1 watt per square centimeter of the substrate **102**, causing a plasma to be formed in the first plasma region **132**. The plasma causes the fluorinated hydrocarbon and the fluoromethane to react to form the protective polymer **136** on the existing top surface of the semiconductor device **100**, extending onto the dielectric liner **120** in the deep trench **112** proximate to the top surface **106** of the substrate **102**. Substantially no polymer is formed on the dielectric liner **120** at the bottom **124** of the deep trench **112**. Substantially no dielectric material is removed from the dielectric liner **120** during the pre-etch deposition process. In another

version of the instant example, the fluorinated hydrocarbon may be hexafluorocyclobutane (C_4F_6), octafluorocyclopentane (C_5F_8), perfluorocyclohexane (C_6F_{12}), perfluoropropane (C_3F_8), perfluoroethane (C_2F_6) or tetrafluoromethane (CF_4).

Referring to FIG. 1G, a main etch process of the two-step process is performed to remove the dielectric liner **120** at the bottom **124** of the deep trench **112**. The main etch process causes no substantial degradation of the dielectric liner **120** on the sidewalls **122** of the deep trench **112**. Concurrently, the main etch process reacts the fluorinated hydrocarbon and the fluoromethane to maintain and possibly increase the protective polymer **136**. The protective polymer **136** may increase in thickness, for example, by 100 nanometers to 500 nanometers on the top surface of the semiconductor device **100** adjacent to the deep trench **112**. The protective polymer **136** advantageously prevents removal of dielectric material from the dielectric liner **120** during the main etch process. An example method of performing the main etch process will now be described. The semiconductor device **100** is placed in a second chamber **138**, which may be the first chamber **130** of FIG. 1F. A substrate chuck, not shown, supporting the substrate **102** may be held at a temperature of 0° C. to 35° C. A carrier gas such as argon is flowed into a second plasma region **140** of the second chamber **138** over the semiconductor device **100** at a rate of 125 sccm to 1500 sccm. A fluorinated hydrocarbon with a fluorine-to-carbon atomic ratio of at least 2 to 1, designated as C_4F_8 in FIG. 1G, is flowed into the second plasma region **140** at a rate of 20 sccm to 80 sccm with the carrier gas. Fluoromethane is flowed into the second plasma region **140** at a rate of 5 sccm to 40 sccm with the fluorinated hydrocarbon. A pressure in the second plasma region **140** is maintained at 20 millitorr to 30 millitorr. RF power is applied to an electrode **142** over the second plasma region **140** at an average power level of 3 watts to 5 watts per square centimeter of the substrate **102**, causing a plasma to be formed in the second plasma region **140**. The plasma generates fluorine radicals which remove the dielectric liner **120** at the bottom **124** of the deep trench **112**.

The sidewalls **122** are substantially straight up to the top surface **106** of the substrate **102**, and not flared, enabling the deep trench **112** to be located closer to components of the semiconductor device **100** and thus advantageously reducing a size of the semiconductor device **100**. The dielectric liner **120** has a substantially uniform thickness up to the top surface **106** of the substrate **102**, advantageously enabling a thinner layer of silicon dioxide **126**, advantageously reducing a fabrication cost of the semiconductor device **100**. In one version of the instant example, the pre-etch deposition process and the main etch process may be performed in the same chamber **130** and **138**, the RF power may be continued from the pre-etch deposition process to the main etch process, and flows of the fluorinated hydrocarbon and the fluoromethane may be continued and adjusted from the pre-etch deposition process to the main etch process, so that a plasma is advantageously maintained from the pre-etch deposition process to the main etch process, eliminating the need to strike a plasma at the low pressure of the main etch process.

Referring to FIG. 1H, an ash process is performed to remove the protective polymer **136** of FIG. 1G. The ash process causes no substantial degradation of the dielectric liner **120** on the sidewalls **122** of the deep trench **112**. An example ash process will now be described. The semiconductor device **100** is placed in a third chamber **144**, which may be the first chamber **130** of FIG. 1F and/or the second

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chamber **138** of FIG. **1G**. A carrier gas such as argon is flowed into a plasma region **146** of the second chamber **138** at a rate of 500 sccm to 1000 sccm. Oxygen gas is flowed into the plasma region **146** at a rate of 125 sccm to 500 sccm. A pressure in the plasma region **146** is maintained at 150 millitorr to 300 millitorr. RF power is applied to an electrode **148** over the plasma region **146** at an average power level of 0.5 watts to 1 watt per square centimeter of the substrate **102**, causing a plasma to be formed in the plasma region **146**. The plasma generates oxygen radicals which remove the protective polymer **136** of FIG. **1G**. In one version of the instant example, the ash process may be performed in the same chamber **138** as the main etch process, so that polymer deposited on surface of the chamber **138** during the main etch process is advantageously removed during the ash process, preventing buildup of polymer, and desirably increasing consistency of the main etch process.

Referring to FIG. **1I**, an electrically conductive trench fill **150** is formed in the deep trench **112**, contacting the substrate **102** at the bottom **124**. The trench fill **150** may include, for example, polycrystalline silicon, referred to as polysilicon, doped to have a same conductivity type as the substrate **102** at the bottom **124** of the deep trench **112**. The trench fill **150** may be formed by forming one or more layers of polysilicon over an existing top surface of the semiconductor device **100**, extending into the deep trench **112** and contacting the substrate **102** at the bottom **124**. The polysilicon may be doped during formation of the layers, or may be doped by ion implantation. Polysilicon over the top surface **106** of the substrate **102** is subsequently removed, for example by a chemical mechanical polish (CMP) process and/or an etchback process.

FIG. **2** is a cross section of an example semiconductor device. The semiconductor device **200** is formed in a substrate **202** as described in reference to FIG. **1A**. In the instant example, the substrate **202** includes an n-type buried layer **252**; semiconductor material in the substrate **202** above, below and surrounding the n-type buried layer **252** is p-type.

A first deep trench **212**, which is at least 10 microns deep, has a closed-loop configuration and surrounds and abuts the n-type buried layer **252**. The first deep trench **212** has a first dielectric liner **220** abutting the substrate **202** and extending from proximate to a top surface **206** of the substrate **202** to proximate to a bottom **224** of the first deep trench **212**. At least a portion of the bottom **224** of the first deep trench **212** is free of the first dielectric liner **220**. A first trench fill **250** of p-type polysilicon is disposed in the first deep trench **212**, extending to the bottom **224** and making contact to the p-type semiconductor material of the substrate **202**. Sidewalls of the first deep trench **212** are substantially straight up to the top surface **206** of the substrate **202**, accruing the advantages described in reference to FIG. **1G**.

The semiconductor device **200** includes a second deep trench **254** which extends to the n-type buried layer **252**. The second deep trench **254** is at least 10 microns deep and has a lateral aspect ratio less than 2, that is, a ratio of a lateral length to a lateral width is less than 2. The second deep trench **254** has a second dielectric liner **256** abutting the substrate **202** and extending from proximate to the top surface **206** of the substrate **202** to a bottom **258** of the second deep trench **254**. At least a portion of the bottom **258** of the second deep trench **254** is free of the first dielectric liner **220**. A second trench fill **260** of n-type polysilicon is disposed in the second deep trench **254**, extending to the bottom **258** and making contact to the n-type semiconductor material of the n-type buried layer **252**. Sidewalls of the second deep trench **254** are substantially straight up to the

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top surface **206** of the substrate **202**, accruing the advantages described in reference to FIG. **1G**.

While various embodiments of the present invention have been described above, it should be understood that they have been presented by way of example only and not limitation. Numerous changes to the disclosed embodiments can be made in accordance with the disclosure herein without departing from the spirit or scope of the invention. Thus, the breadth and scope of the present invention should not be limited by any of the above described embodiments. Rather, the scope of the invention should be defined in accordance with the following claims and their equivalents.

What is claimed is:

1. A method of forming a semiconductor device, comprising the steps:
 - providing a substrate;
 - forming a deep trench at least 10 microns deep and 0.5 microns to 3 microns wide in the substrate;
 - forming a dielectric liner on sidewalls and a bottom of the deep trench;
 - forming a protective polymer over a top of the substrate by a pre-etch deposition plasma process, the protective polymer extending onto the dielectric liner in the deep trench proximate to the top surface of the substrate, but not on the dielectric liner at the bottom of the deep trench, while concurrently removing substantially no dielectric material from the dielectric liner;
 - removing the dielectric liner at the bottom of the deep trench by a main etch plasma process, while concurrently removing no polymer material from the protective polymer on the dielectric liner in the deep trench proximate to the top surface of the substrate and removing no dielectric material from the dielectric liner in the deep trench proximate to the top surface of the substrate; and
 - subsequently removing the protective polymer.
2. The method of claim 1, wherein the dielectric liner comprises primarily silicon dioxide.
3. The method of claim 2, wherein the dielectric liner is thermal oxide.
4. The method of claim 1, wherein the dielectric liner is 500 nanometers to 1 micron thick.
5. The method of claim 1, wherein the pre-etch deposition plasma process comprises:
 - placing the semiconductor device in a first chamber, the first chamber having a first plasma region over the semiconductor device;
 - flowing a carrier gas into the first plasma region;
 - flowing a fluorinated hydrocarbon with a fluorine-to-carbon atomic ratio of at least 2 to 1, into the first plasma region;
 - flowing fluoromethane into the first plasma region;
 - maintaining a pressure in the first plasma region at 35 millitorr to 65 millitorr; and
 - applying radio frequency (RF) power to an electrode over the first plasma region, causing a first plasma to be formed in the first plasma region.
6. The method of claim 5, wherein the fluorinated hydrocarbon is octafluorocyclobutane.
7. The method of claim 1, wherein the protective polymer formed by the pre-etch deposition plasma process over the top of the substrate adjacent to the deep trench is 10 nanometers to 50 nanometers thick.
8. The method of claim 1, wherein the main etch plasma process comprises:

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placing the semiconductor device in a second chamber, the second chamber having a second plasma region over the semiconductor device;

flowing a carrier gas into the second plasma region;

flowing a fluorinated hydrocarbon with a fluorine-to-carbon atomic ratio of at least 2 to 1, into the second plasma region;

flowing fluoromethane into the second plasma region; maintaining a pressure in the plasma region at 20 millitorr to 30 millitorr; and

applying RF power to an electrode over the plasma region, causing a plasma to be formed in the second plasma region.

9. The method of claim 8, wherein the fluorinated hydrocarbon is octafluorocyclobutane.

10. The method of claim 1, wherein the main etch plasma process increases a thickness of the protective polymer.

11. The method of claim 10, wherein the main etch plasma process adds 100 nanometers to 500 nanometers to the

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thickness of the protective polymer over the top of the substrate adjacent to the deep trench.

12. The method of claim 1, wherein the pre-etch deposition plasma process and the main etch plasma process are performed in a same chamber.

13. The method of claim 12, wherein RF power is maintained during a transition between the pre-etch deposition plasma process and the main etch plasma process so as to maintain a plasma over the semiconductor device during the transition.

14. The method of claim 1, wherein removing the protective polymer comprises an ash process.

15. The method of claim 14, wherein the ash process and the main etch plasma process are performed in a same chamber.

16. The method of claim 1, wherein the deep trench is 25 microns to 40 microns deep.

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